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ABSTRACT

The Open University of Great Britain is an open-enrollment, home-based educational system in which the majority of the instruction is conducted via broadcasts and correspondence. One radio program, one television program, and the related readings from a course on decision-making in the British Education System were evaluated to see if they: 1) related to the course to which they were associated; 2) provided an experience which could not otherwise conveniently be presented; and 3) achieved a good blend of broadcast and written material. Using a mailed questionnaire and telephone interviews, a survey measured student viewing and listening time and participant satisfaction with the integration of the broadcasts, the guest speakers, the usefulness of the programs, and the entertainment value of the programs. When students were queried about the extent that they used the course literature to prepare for broadcast, it was shown that course materials were not used in the way they were intended. (EMH)

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Broadcast Evaluation Report No. 2

CUMBRIA CASE STUDY

E221 : TV3

R6

Audio-Visual Media Research Group
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY
Open University

ER003131

Broadcast Evaluation Report

No. 2

Television Programme	3: "The Cumbrian Education Committee"
Radio Programme	6: "We're all Cumbrians Now"
Related Unit	6: "Reorganization: Cumbria"
Open University Course	E221: "Decision-Making in the British Education System"

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Appendices are not included with the Main Report but are bound separately and are available, on request, from the Audio-Visual Media Research Group. They contain:

Appendix A: Broadcast Notes

B: Specimen Letters and Postal Questionnaire to Students and Tutors

C: Students' Answers to Open-ended Questions

D: Tutors' Answers to Open-ended Questions

E: Course Tutor Feedback (CT4) Relevant to the Study

F: CMA 42 Feedback Relevant to the Study

THE 1974 BROADCAST EVALUATION PROGRAMME

Aims

This report is one of a series of 18, based on evaluations of 35 Open University programmes carried out during 1974, by the Audio-Visual Media Research Group of the Institute of Educational Technology, in conjunction with the BBC.

What we are trying to do in these studies can be summarised as follows:

1. to discover typical or potential uses of broadcasting within a faculty area, to see whether these succeed, and whether improvements are needed, with the idea of generating information useful for decision-making in new courses likely to use broadcasting in a similar way.

2. to provide producers with information about certain issues which arose during the making of a specific programme - for example, did students find a particular technique helpful or not?

3. to discover practical difficulties encountered by students in using broadcast material (e.g. awkward transmission times, late mailing of related printed material, etc.), and possible ways of overcoming these difficulties.

4. to produce information which will generate and test some assumptions made by the Audio-Visual Media Research Group about the uses of broadcasting in the Open University, and how students use or learn from broadcasts. Some of the questions to which we are seeking answers are:

   (i) to what extent do students benefit or suffer as a result of the position of a broadcast in a course?

   (ii) do students require more help in identifying the function of broadcasts and how to use them in their studies than is currently accepted in course production?

   (iii) do course teams make the fullest use of the potential of broadcasting in the Open University situation?

5. to involve producers and academics in a detailed evaluation study, with the aim of demonstrating some of the evaluation methods available, and how to select and use these methods, so that producers are more aware of what they might do themselves, and of the limitations and difficulties of certain approaches to evaluation.

Criteria

It can be seen that the emphasis in the studies is on the improvement of broadcasting as a teaching device. We are more concerned with learning how to make future programmes more helpful for students, than with passing summary judgements on individual programmes, or on broadcasting as a whole. On the

other hand, it would be misleading for us to pretend that the evaluation reports were totally objective, and unsullied by the values held by the evaluators themselves, or by the producers and academics involved in the studies. For improvements to be suggested, some model, however vague, is necessary of what broadcasting ought to be doing in the Open University. For this reason, we will try to make explicit what criteria we have had in mind when we have been studying programmes.

First of all, we have been concerned to examine whether the broadcasts have been made with a clear educational intent, in the sense of providing the student with knowledge or experience relevant to the course he or she is pursuing. This is an important point, and it is crucial to the likely acceptance of the evaluation reports that our intentions here are fully understood. Certainly we have in general tried to avoid judging whether the educational aims of the programme were the right ones, at this stage of our enquiries. Whether a particular way of using television or radio is appropriate in the Open University situation cannot be determined by evaluation of a single programme. A programme may fail for many reasons, none of which may be connected with the educational intentions underlying the programme, or with the way it was made. It is hoped, though, that as we increase the number of programmes evaluated, it will become clear that certain kinds of intention behind a programme will be very difficult to achieve, that others require certain pre-requisites or conditions, while yet more can usually be achieved with ease in the Open University situation. In other words, we have tried to avoid commenting on whether a programme should or should not have chosen, as a matter of principle, for example a case study approach, or a particular topic as a case-study, at a certain point in time. What we have been concerned with, though, is whether there was at least some kind of educational purpose behind the choice of the material or approach, and whether in fact the students were able to discern this purpose, and use the material provided in a relevant way (even if the way the material was used was unanticipated).

The question of whether a programme is relevant or not is much more complex. This is a judgement that we would prefer to leave to the course team. Nevertheless, the students' perception - rightly or wrongly - of a programme's relevance is of course crucial to the likelihood of the programme succeeding in its intentions, and this has been an important part of our enquiries. In general, though, we have proceeded on the assumptions that the course team at least believes the programme has relevance to a course.

Another criterion generally present in our evaluation of particular television programmes has been whether the programme has been able to provide students with knowledge or experience which it would be difficult to provide as cheaply or conveniently in any other way in the Open University situation. It is not a criterion we would wish to apply mechanically, without other considerations being taken into account. There is considerable virtue in providing students with a variety of programme formats, and under certain circumstances we recognise it will be more convenient or appropriate to use

television, when radio or print could well have been used instead. Nevertheless, television is a scarce resource within the University, and therefore we believe that our evaluation should concern itself to some extent with the potential of broadcasting for uniquely bringing certain knowledge and experiences to the student.

A third criterion we have borne in mind is the extent to which the intended relationship between broadcast and text has been achieved, and the extent to which students have been able to integrate broadcasts with the rest of their activities. Occasionally, of course, programmes are deliberately designed to stand alone, but nevertheless there is usually some assumed relationship between broadcasts and texts, and so we have been concerned to discover whether students themselves have been able to make this integration.

When preparing these evaluation reports, we have tried to avoid incorporating in the reports our own judgements on the artistic or aesthetic quality of a programme. This is not because we have been uninfluenced by such factors, nor because we believe them to be unimportant. However, although we have very clear preferences for some programmes over others, which may well show through in some of the evaluation reports, our views on this aspect of a programme are not likely to be better based than anyone else's. Furthermore, we believe that it would be very difficult to draw conclusions for future programme-making as a result of an interpretation of the aesthetic quality of a programme. There are, as will become apparent from the evaluation reports, enough mundane matters which need to be altered or improved, without our having to enter this difficult area. Similarly, we have not generally been too concerned with techniques of programme-making, except where we have been asked specifically by a producer or academic to investigate whether certain techniques have enhanced or impeded the educational aims of a programme, or where it has become clear from student responses that problems have arisen as a result of techniques used in the programme. The emphasis of the evaluation therefore is intended to be very much directed towards the educational aspects of the broadcasts.

Evidence

Besides trying to make explicit the criteria which have guided us in these studies, we ought also to clarify the relative importance we have given to various kinds of evidence. For instance, although obviously a programme stands a much better chance of achieving its objectives if it is rated highly by students, in terms of usefulness, interest, enjoyment, etc., we have not been content to accept this as a main criterion, for a number of reasons. It will become clear on reading our studies that students or even tutors are not always the best judges of the relevance or even the intellectual weight of a programme. Furthermore, students vary in their reaction to different programmes, and frankly we are more interested in discovering why a programme helps one group of students and not another.

Nor have we put heavy reliance on the more classical type of evaluation evidence, that derived from performance tests. The main aim of a programme is seldom to introduce important and fresh cognitive content. If the ideas are that important, they are nearly always dealt with in the correspondence texts as well. Therefore it is often impossible to deduce from performance tests alone what a student has learned from the broadcast, and what he has learned through the correspondence text. In addition, performance tests rarely indicate what corrective action is necessary to improve a programme. There are often other important aims behind a programme which are not strictly content-based, and many of the reasons why programmes do not succeed as well as they might have nothing to do with the actual content of the programmes. Performance testing therefore is, on its own, too narrow a base for evaluation, but nevertheless it still has a useful role in our studies, used in conjunction with other evidence.

Group discussions can be extremely useful for generating ideas about why programmes have succeeded or failed, and what kind of improvements could be made. However, a group discussion can also be very untypical of the general student reaction to a programme. The initial reaction of the first student to respond to the programme tends to set the tone for the rest of the group. Furthermore, students usually watch in isolation, rather than in groups, and the group situation stimulates students to think about a programme in a different way to that of the isolated student.

Evidence from the standard University feedback sources, such as CURF (the Course Unit Report Form), CT4 (Course Tutor Reports), and Staff Tutor reports, is sometimes lacking for a specific programme, and when it does exist, is usually not detailed enough. Furthermore, both CURF and CT4 suffer from low response rates, and so one is never sure whether the information is representative.

Finally, even specially designed questionnaires, based on a representative sample, and with high response rates, suffer from the superficiality of response to the questions set. Telephone interviewing can sometimes overcome this, but 40% of our students do not have telephones.

It can be seen therefore that every source of evidence, taken alone, has its drawbacks. We have therefore tried to create a situation where information from a wide variety of sources has been collected, so that with the relevant producer and academic we can build up a coherent picture of the way a programme has been used by students, the relationship of the programme to the rest of the course, the consequences for different kinds of student, and ways in which the programme could be made of more benefit to students.

Method

To do this, we have developed a method which we have used fairly consistently in nearly all the 18 studies, and which we hope to continue to use in 1975.

We invited in late 1973 senior producers in each of the six faculty areas to suggest between three and five programmes each, which were examples of typical or potential uses of broadcasting within a faculty area. Each senior producer

responded, and when the offers were examined in detail, it became clear that in some cases two or more programmes were linked together, and could be examined within one study. In effect, we were offered altogether 21 television programmes and six radio programmes. One television programme was not evaluated, as we were given the wrong programme number, and another programme was not evaluated because of pressure of work. In addition, we were also involved in a separate study of M231 (Analysis) which includes an evaluation of a further six television and four radio programmes (Ahrens, Burt and Gallagher, 1974). Thus the following programmes were included in the 1974 evaluation programme:

TABLE 1. Programmes evaluated in 1974

Evaluation Report No.	Faculty	Course	Television programmes	Radio programmes	Evaluators
15	Arts	A302	TV9	-	Gallagher
18		AMST283	TV8	-	Bates
6	Social	DS261	TV4	-	Gallagher
7	Sciences	DS261	TV6	Radio 9	Bates/Roberts
11		DT201	TV7	-	Gallagher
2	Educational	E221	TV3	Radio 6	Gallagher
8	Studies	E221	-	Radio 15	Gallagher
17		E283	TV6/7/8	-	Gallagher
10		E351	TV4/5/6	Radio 7	Bates
1	Mathematics	M231	TV1/2/3/4/5/6	Radio 1/2/3/4	Gallagher
12		MDT241	-	Radio 4	Gallagher
4	Science	S24-	TV7	Radio 3	Gallagher
9		S323	TV9	-	Gallagher
16		SM351	TV7	-	Gallagher
5	Technology	T100	TV26	-	Gallagher/Roberts
13		T241	TV11	-	Bates
14		T241	TV12	-	Bates
3		T291	TV6	-	Bates
18		15	25	10	

The way the sample of programmes was drawn requires justification. This was the first time that a detailed evaluation of a series of programmes had been attempted. (Two previous studies in 1972, one on E283, TV4/5 and Radio 9, and one on MST282, TV1-4 had been attempted, but at the express request of the producers involved). It was therefore necessary to ensure co-operation from the BBC. It was considered that the study would be more welcomed if the BBC itself was allowed to suggest the programmes to be evaluated. In any case, with over 800 television programmes and a similar number of radio programmes current in 1974, it was impossible either to choose a sample large enough to be representative of the whole BBC/OU output within the resources available, or for us ourselves to have a broad overview of the total production of programmes. We believe that the Senior Producer is in the best position to know the full range of output within his faculty area. Indeed, a major interest for us was to see what kind of programmes would be offered. In any case, it must be remembered that the aim of the evaluation is not to evaluate broadcasting as a whole, but to try to improve the use of broadcasting. If the programmes offered were therefore indeed representative of even just the future thinking of the producers in a given faculty area, this would be sufficient for our purpose. The danger of course is that programmes which are considered to be especially outstanding, or programmes where there is profound disagreement between producers and academics about their value, might be offered instead. Even should this have happened, though, there would be value in this. In effect, we were offered a very wide range of programme. Many without doubt were typical, while one or two were pointers to possible new developments in the use of broadcasting. The main weakness was the small number of radio programmes offered. Only two of the ten radio programmes were specifically offered, the remainder being dragged in through being linked to television programmes. This pattern in fact is being repeated in 1975. It is very difficult to obtain recommendations for radio programmes for evaluation, and this - together with some of the evaluation results - does suggest a serious undervaluing of radio, even in the BBC.

Once the sample had been settled, a work-plan for the year was worked out, to ensure a spread of work-load across the year. This led to programmes being allocated to each of us, six studies to Bates, and twelve to Gallagher. Between two and four weeks before the repeat transmission of a programme we would view the programmes on video tape, skim-read the text, supplementary material, and course guide, looking at the relationship between the text and programme, and then go and see the producer, and where possible the academic responsible. This interview was informal and unstructured, but the aim of it was to determine what the producer and academic were trying to do in the programme, what they would like us to find out, and any special difficulties which were encountered in getting the programme made, or difficulties anticipated when the programme was transmitted. Producer and academic were interviewed separately. These interviews and our examination of the broadcast and relevant printed material provided us with the basis for a questionnaire. Occasionally, where the subject matter was particularly difficult, the educational technologist attached

to the course team would provide help in explaining or suggesting difficulties, and in the wording of certain "test-type" questions. The draft of the questionnaire was then circulated to the producer and academic, for their further suggestions and approval, and to the University's Survey Research Department, for an independent view on the wording of questions. At the same time, the University Data Processing Division was asked to produce a random sample of generally about 200 students, with three sets of address labels, for postal questionnaires, and an independent random list of 50-100 students with telephones. This sample was drawn to avoid students on other studies (e.g. CURF). It was considered the minimum number necessary to give a reliable sample on each course (see the report itself for its error factor, as this varied from study to study.)

The questionnaires varied from study to study, but most contained questions about if or when the students watched or listened, reasons for missing the broadcast, (if they had missed it), whether they had read the unit and broadcast notes before or after seeing the programme, and where they were in the course, how useful, enjoyable, and difficult they found the programme, what they thought the purpose of the programme was, usually some questions about the content of the programme, sufficient to assess whether they had understood what the programme was about, and then questions specific to the programme being studied. Students were also usually asked how they were finding the course. A feature of all the questionnaires was the combination of pre-coded and open-ended questions. Students were asked, for instance, not only to rate the programme on a fixed scale of usefulness, but also to give reasons for their answer. The questionnaires were posted to arrive within five days of the second transmission of a programme. (Where two or more programmes were involved in a single study, the procedure varied, according to circumstances). A reminder was sent within 10 days, and a second reminder within another 10 days. These reminders boosted response rates considerably, most averaging over 70%.

On some studies (9 in all), the postal questionnaires were backed up by about 50 telephone interviews. These were used where there were doubts about whether a postal questionnaire would provide the information required in sufficient depth. The telephone interviews also proved useful as a general cross-check with questionnaire information. The interviews would be carried out over a period of five days in the evenings, by the whole evaluation team, sometimes supplemented by part-time - but trained - interviewers, and sometimes the producer was also used as an interviewer. In one instance, a group discussion was held with six students by telephone, using conference-call facilities. The decision whether to use telephone interviewing was also governed by the work-load in a particular week. Thus, on some enquries, although it was desirable, it was not practical.

Again on some studies (6 in all), group discussions were arranged, where the programme was shown to a group of students. The procedure was to contact a staff tutor and find out whether any classes or day-schools were arranged within a week of the transmissions. Sometimes a discussion could be specially

arranged. We would copy the programme from 1" Ampex on to ½" cassette, and take a VCR machine to the study centre, and show the programme to about 10-30 students. (Staff tutors had usually written to students to tell them we were coming, or even to invite them specially.) The discussion would be deliberately loosely-structured, led by the evaluator. Sometimes the producer attended, but was not always announced. The first question was usually: "What did you think of the programme?" The evaluator would normally have a range of questions prepared. In most cases, it was not necessary to put these questions, since they tended to be covered spontaneously in the discussion, but if the discussion began to drift away from the programme, one of these questions would be asked, in order to bring the discussion back to the programme. The discussion was sound recorded, and later transcribed. The aim of these discussions was to obtain ideas about the programme and what it meant to students, which we could not anticipate. Ideally, we would like to have based the postal questionnaire on the discussions, but these discussions had to be held after the transmission, and there was insufficient time to incorporate points from the discussions in the questionnaires. Used in conjunction with questionnaire, and other data, however, the discussions are useful for providing insight into student's ideas about broadcasting and how they use it. There is considerable evidence though from the evaluation reports that such discussions can give a very misleading impression of general student reaction, particularly if the producer is present. We also tried to hold group discussions at summer school for three of the studies, but these turned out to be either impossible to carry out (no-one turned up for two) or of no value for our purposes.

Finally, we have made use of other feedback information available, particularly course unit report form data, course tutor feedback from the CT4, and CMA feedback.

Pre-coded data from postal questionnaires and telephone interviews are hand-counted, and the open-ended comments are typed for each question. The quantitative and qualitative data are then sifted, and with manual cross-checks, a general picture is built up in the form of a full report. This report draws not only on information from this specific enquiry, but also on information from the other studies. This cumulative build-up of information is extremely important. For instance, a finding which looks none too solid in a single study - because, for example, it may be based on small numbers - becomes much more significant when the finding is repeated in several different independent studies. Similarly, a finding which has a number of possible explanations in one study can be more confidently explained in the light of similar findings in other studies. We have in fact waited until data from all 35 programmes have been collected before the first evaluation study has been written (with the exception of the M231 study.)

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to stress too heavily the level of certainty of our findings. We do not wish to give a pseudo-scientific gloss to our enquiries. It must be remembered that these 18 studies were carried out over a period of just six months (April to September 1974). The entire team

consisted of two evaluators, a research assistant (Carrie Roberts) a secretary shared with other IET staff, and a "spending" budget of £1500 for the whole year. In addition, the Group was involved in other major studies (e.g. piloting a VCR system in study centres) and heavy committee work. Nevertheless, a new study was being started almost every week during the six-month period. The actual combination of methods used was often just as much due to matters of expediency as to carefully designed research method. Nevertheless, we believe we were right to go for as many programmes as possible, and a wide variety of sources of information even if this has meant obtaining "quick and dirty" information. Table 2 summarises the sources of information available and used in each enquiry.

TABLE 2. Sources of Information Used on Each Enquiry

Evaluation Report No.	Programmes	Specially designed postal questionnaire	Telephone interviews	Group discussions	CURF	CMA (feedback)	CT4
15	A302/TV9	X	-	X	X	-	-
18	AMST283/TV8	X	-	-	X	-	X
6	DS261/TV4	X	X	-	X	-	X
7	DS261/TV6	X	X	X	X	-	X
11	DT201/TV7	X	X	X	X	-	-
2	E221/TV3/ Radio 6	X*	-	-	-	X	X
8	E221/Radio 15	X	-	X	-	X	X
17	E283/TV6 8	X	-	-	X	X	X
10	E351/TV4 6/ Radio 7	X	X	-	X	-	-
1	M231/TV1 6/ Radio 1 4	X	X	-	X	X	-
12	MDT241/Radio 4	X	X	-	X	-	X
4	S24-/TV7/ Radio 3	X	X	-	-	X	X
9	S323/TV9	X	-	X	-	X	-
16	SM351/TV7	X	X	-	-	-	-
5	T100/TV26	X	-	-	X	-	X
13	T241/TV11	X	-	-**	-	X	-
14	T241/TV12	X	-	-**	-	X	-
3	T291/TV6	X	-	X	-	X	X
18	18	18	8	6	10	9	10

* = questionnaire also sent to tutors

** = tried, but failed

At the same time, because we have been in a unique position of having studied a number of programmes across all faculty areas, we have risked interpretation and occasionally speculation. This explains why we have prepared such a full report, with as much information as possible available. We hope that the report is presented in such a way that the reader can draw his or her own conclusions about the validity of the results, and our interpretation of the results. In the long run, we believe that the real value, if any, of these reports will be in the stimulus and thought they provoke amongst those concerned with using broadcasting, rather than with the specific recommendations and conclusions. However, for those too busy to work through the full report, we have made recommendations and conclusions, and produced these in the summary.

Finally, just as important for us as the results themselves has been the co-operation that has resulted between producers, academics, students and ourselves. These evaluation studies have been, without exception, supported in every possible way by BBC producers, students and OU academics. Frankly, we underestimated both the amount of work involved for ourselves, and the willingness of producers and academics to engage in the actual process of evaluation, and we hope to involve both groups more fully in 1975. The evaluation studies are due just as much to the efforts of students and the academic and production staff, as to ourselves. At the same time, just as the producer has to take the final responsibility for a programme, so we must take final responsibility for these evaluation reports. They do represent in the main our own views, and we must take responsibility for any errors or offence caused by the report.

E221: Decision-Making in British Education Systems
Television Programme 3: The Cumbria Education Committee
Radio Programme 6: We're All Cumbrians Now

The Programmes in Context

The course itself is about the management and administration of British public education systems. Its principal aim is to analyse the decision-making processes within these systems and to develop an understanding of the complexity of, and interconnections between, factors affecting policy formulation in education. The factors examined include the organizational context of the decision-making process, the personal beliefs and prejudices of the decision-makers and the availability of resources.

The programmes in our study are transmitted when, according to the course timetable students will have just reached Unit 6 of the course. This unit is the second of three dealing with local government in education. Unit 5 and the first part of Unit 6 discuss the workings of local government, and the arguments for and against the reform of the pre- 1974 local government structure, largely in the abstract. Unit 6 then moves on to a case study of the preparation for local government reorganization in the new county of Cumbria.

The television and radio programmes form an integral part of this Cumbria case study: while the text concentrates on planning for reorganization prior to the April 1973 election of the new LEA which was to assume responsibility for Cumbrian education, the programmes present aspects of the situation as it existed in December 1973 - about six months before the new authority actually took over from the existing six education authorities.

Clearly then, much of the value of the programmes will be lost if students have not read through the correspondence text before viewing and listening. This is pointed out to students in the text itself, where incidentally, each unit is introduced by a preface which places that unit within its context in the course, and gives details of any set reading, radio and television programmes, and a suggested working order: Students are advised to read through the whole of Unit 6 - "however rapidly"[1] - before turning to the Broadcast Notes and then the programmes. 27th April is suggested as the first date for main study of Unit 6[1]: this is also the date of the first transmission of the television programme - a Saturday at 11.25 a.m. Since the repeat transmission was on an early morning weekday - Thursday at 7.05 a.m. - it is to be expected, a priori, that most students would watch the first broadcast. So the very most that students working to schedule could manage would be perhaps a quick flip through the unit, or even just through the Cumbria section.

1 E221: Units 5-7: Local Government in Education, p.64.

1 E221: Introduction and Guide to the Course, p.8.

In fact, because of industrial action at the beginning of the year, the mailing of Units 5-7, which was due on 9th April did not actually take place until the week beginning 20th April. This meant that detailed prior study of the Unit material was impossible for most students. To help overcome this problem, the two transmissions of the television programme - on 27th April and 2nd May - were supplemented by a specially arranged third transmission on 11th May, exactly two weeks after the first. Students were notified of this via a Stop Press. Table 3 shows the time-span of events and activities related to the Cumbria Case Study.

Table 3: Critical Dates For the Cumbria Case Study

Study week Number	Date	
9	March 30	Supplementary material for Units 5-7 mailed in this week.
10a	April 6	Recommended start date for main study of Unit 5.
10b	April 13	Easter week.
11	April 20	Units 5-7 mailed in this week.
12	April 27	(i) Recommended start date for main study of Unit 6 (containing Cumbria Case Study)
		(ii) TV3 "Cumbria Education Committee" 1st transmission, at 11.25 a.m.
	30	Radio 6 "We're All Cumbrians Now" 1st transmission, at 18.25 p.m.
	May 2	TV3: 2nd transmission, at 07.05 a.m.
13	4	(i) TMA 01 due (covering Units 2-4).
		(ii) Radio 6: 2nd transmission, at 16.20 p.m.
14	11	(i) Recommended start date for main study of Unit 7.
		(ii) TV3: specially arranged 3rd transmission, at 08.30 a.m.
15	18	TMA 01 cut-off (Units 2-4).
16	25	(i) Recommended start date for main study of Unit 8.
		*(i) CMA 02 due (covering Units 5-7).
19	June 15	TMA 02 due (covering Units 5-7).
20b	29	TMA 02 cut-off (Units 5-7).

*Cut-off date for all CMAs: 21st October.

At the time of transmission of TV3 and Radio 6 students would have been working on their first tutor-marked assignment for E221 - based on Units 2, 3 and 4 - due on 4th May, the cut-off date being 18th May. CMA 02, due on 25th May, and TMA 02, with due and cut-off dates 15th June and 29th June drew on Units 5 to 7 and their broadcasts. However, it would certainly have been possible to complete the assignments successfully without reference to the broadcast material.

The broadcast notes for the Cumbria programmes were mailed separately from the unit texts at the beginning of April. They are in the format generally used in the Educational Studies Faculty, and give details of the content, context and objectives of the programmes as well as outlining the way in which students should prepare for, and follow up, both programmes (e.g. suggesting "points to note" during the programmes and questions to be answered afterwards). Whereas in the correspondence text students are advised to read all of Unit 6 before viewing and listening, the broadcast notes specifically mention the Cumbria section of the unit as necessary pre-reading. The suggested order in which the materials should be approached is - unit text, followed by television programme, followed by radio programme. Brief "background notes to the programmes" which include biographical notes on the contributors to the radio programme, should, in fact, have made both programmes just about comprehensible to students unable to study the correspondence text before-hand.

The broadcast notes also contain 25 pages of "accompanying documents" to the television programme. These include an agenda, committee minutes and other documents, of which the most relevant passages have been marked with a line in the left-hand margin. Students are advised to read through the documents, if possible, before watching the programme and to have them in their hands during the broadcast so that they can follow them along with the committee members. It is also suggested that during the television programme students should make notes on particular points in the margin of the documents. Unfortunately, the order of the notes was confused during printing, and a Stop Press had to be sent to students with details of the order in which the notes should, in fact, have appeared.

The Programmes: Content and Purpose

The television programme "The Cumbria Education Committee" and the radio programme "We're All Cumbrians Now", described by the producer as a "case study" and a "discussion" respectively, are of course part of the larger Cumbria case study: both contain material relevant to Objective 5 of Unit 6 - "To explain, on the basis of the Cumbria case study ... elements of the process of planning at local level for the birth of the new authorities, understanding both its complexity and the constraints under which the participants operated."[3]

3 E221: Units 5-7: "Local Government in Education", p.66.

The television programme is an edited recording of the proceedings of an actual meeting of the Cumbria Education Committee. The Committee is seen discussing issues which had to be settled before the change-over date from the old to the new pattern of local government, and at a time when "a new pattern of relations between members and officers was establishing itself". The programme is introduced by a member of the E221 Course Team, Bob Bell, who sets the scene and indicates the areas likely to be covered in the meeting. While, for the most part, actuality sound of the meeting is used as commentary, there are fairly frequent interjections throughout from Bob Bell who highlights certain discussion points and acts as a link from one item to another. It is thus a fairly "directive" programme, since although there are periods during which students are presented with nothing other than the meeting "as it happened", they are guided into and out of these periods - which never last more than about five minutes - by the additional linking commentary.

The radio programme opens with a very short "vox pop" in which "the man in the street" attempts to answer the question "What is Cumbria?" It then moves on to a discussion in which Bob Bell and three committee members from different regions in the new county, cover, in greater detail, some of the issues raised at the televised committee meeting and some of the difficulties facing the new authority in its early stages.

The objectives of the programmes, as stated in the broadcast notes are:

(a) to illustrate directly some of the new county's teething problems.

(b) to introduce some of the actual individuals involved.

(c) to give authentic evidence of decision-making procedures common in any local authority's meetings.

(d) to give authentic evidence of political activities common in any local authority's meetings.[4]

Discussion with John Miller, the producer of the programmes, and Bob Bell revealed no differences in their intentions in terms of the purpose of the programmes. In addition to the formal programme objectives already listed, they mentioned that the programmes should

(e) give students "information about Cumbria".

(f) help them understand "how on Education Committee operates".

(g) "give flesh to the people in the written material".

Method

The correspondence text and broadcast notes were read, the television programme watched and the radio programme listened to. After discussion with John Miller and Bob Bell, a postal questionnaire, designed to examine reaction to the programmes and their degree of success as contributing elements to the Cumbria Case Study, was sent to a sample of 165 students registered for E221 at the beginning of April 1974. The sample was selected randomly by computer to be

4 E221: Supplementary Material, Unit 5-7, p.9

representative of the total student population registered for E221. Because of the time-distance between the first and specially arranged third transmission of the television programme - a period of two weeks - it was decided to mail the questionnaire to arrive on the Monday following the first transmission. Consequently, those who watched the second or third transmission had already received the questionnaire at the time of viewing, and all students had received it before the first transmission of the radio programme.

Exactly the same questionnaire was sent to all 49 tutors on E221, in order to compare their reactions to those of students: to see whether, for example, particular problems caused by the programmes were peculiar to students or were experienced also by the possibly more experienced tutors. Tutors on this course were also being asked to complete the CT4, a report-form on which tutors of certain courses comment regularly on correspondence text, television and radio programmes, assignments and class tutorials. The overlap in information collected by the two different mechanisms was negligible: where possible, the CT4 data has been used in this report to throw light on other aspects of the course which may have a bearing on the responses to our detailed questionnaire.

Information collected on spare CMA cells concerned work-load, television and radio viewing and listening figures, and ratings of usefulness of the broadcast component and of other components of the course. About 700 students completed the CMA feedback cells relating to the material covered by our study, and their responses have been used to cross-validate the answers of our own, much smaller, sample.

Our questionnaire was followed up by two reminder letters to both students and tutors. The first reminder was mailed seven days after the last television transmission, and the second reminder, which also contained another copy of the questionnaire was mailed ten days later. A total of 128 students (78%) returned the questionnaire: of these 125 (76%) were in a usable form. Of the tutors, 41 returned usable questionnaires (84%).

Two standard errors were calculated for the student respondents: at the 95% level of confidence the sampling error is $\pm$ 8%, and the student data can be regarded as representative of all E221 students within those limits. The tutor data contains no sampling error since the entire tutor population was approached.

In many respects, tutor and student reaction did not differ markedly: consequently, reference has normally been made, in the text, to student responses (though the tables generally show both tutor and student break-downs). Where differences did occur, attention has been drawn to these.

Results

The Television Programme

A preliminary 'background' question established that most of our student respondents were teachers (82%) and that another 10% were employed in local or central government. It was hoped to discover whether degree of familiarity with

the material presented in the broadcasts would influence attitudes to the programmes themselves. However, in view of the very small numbers employed in government who, in fact saw or heard one or other of the programmes - 9 students - it was not possible to do more than speculate very tentatively on this point.

A second preliminary question was asked about the work-load for the course. It was felt that something of a "halo" effect might occur between the extent to which students felt over-loaded, and their reactions to the programmes, or perhaps their willingness to watch or listen. The majority of both students and tutors felt that the work-load for the course so far was too much. Relatively more students than tutors felt that it was "much too much", and while only 30% of the students felt that the work-load was "just right", almost 40% of the tutors felt this. However, one student - a teacher - felt that there had been "rather too little" work in the course so far.

Viewing Pattern and Scheduling

The television programme was watched by all but 5 of the tutor respondents (88%), and by 85 (68%) of the students. Only one of the tutors watched more than once, but 20% of the students watched twice and one student watched all three transmissions. (This student lives in Cumbria and knew the people taking part in the programme.)

TABLE 4. Viewing Figures

	At least one transmission		27/4/74 Sat. 11.25 a.m.		2/5/74 Thurs. 7.05 a.m.		11/5/74* Sat. 8.30 a.m.		Only one transmission		No. of responding students and tutors	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
Students	85	68	61	49	21	17	22	18	67	54	125	100
Tutors	36	88	18	44	12	29	6	15	35	85	41	100

*Specially arranged extra transmission

The most popular viewing time was, indeed, Saturday 27th April, and in view of what has been said concerning the late mailing of Unit 6 and the need to have studied it before viewing, it is worth noting that of those students who did watch, 50% watched only this first transmission. However, students who watched the programme on this date (Saturday 27th 11.25 a.m.) were more likely to watch again than students who saw it for the first time at 7.05 a.m. the following Thursday. This could be because Thursday "first-viewers" might, by virtue of their having had more time to study the related print material, have got more out of the programme from just one viewing than Saturday "first-viewers" could do. On the other hand, it may be that some students "opt" for the more personally convenient of the two possible transmission slots and automatically disregard the other: so students would tend to think of themselves as either

"Thursday morning viewers" or "Saturday morning viewers", and would tend to watch only on one or other of those days. This latter view is supported by the fact that those who were Saturday "first-viewers" and who went on to watch again, were twice as likely to do so at the final Saturday transmission as at the intervening Thursday broadcast.

A striking feature is the number of student viewers who also taped the sound of the programme: 17 students - one-fifth of all who viewed - did this, students who viewed twice tending to tape more often than students who viewed once only. On the other hand, only one of the tutors who watched taped the programme sound.

Reasons For Not Watching

Altogether, 40 students (just under a third of respondents) did not watch the television programme. Of these, about a third gave reasons which could be described as "one-off" or "circumstantial": e.g. "taking a field trip", "illness of wife", "in hospital". The remainder, if they gave reasons at all tended to give "on-going" reasons, suggesting that they never or rarely watch: "find the TV element of low information density", "I see/hear (broadcasts) only occasionally" "haven't had time". A couple of students gave being behind schedule on the course as a reason, and one said "the notes seemed comprehensive enough".

Three quarters of these 40 students did not hear the associated radio programme either, and it was the students in this group of 30 who were most likely to give the "on-going" type of reason mentioned above. This group (those who missed both the television and the radio programme) contained a very high proportion of 'C' year entrants - students having just completed a Foundation Course and, of these, a statistically highly significant number who either subsequently withdrew from the E221 course, or who failed the final examination. (Table 5, see over).

Note that the group who neither viewed nor listened and were unsuccessful consists, with only one exception, of 'C' year students, and that the 'C' students who did either view or listen were also more likely, though not significantly so, to fail or withdraw than 'A' or 'B' year students. So, in this particular study, students taking their first post-Foundation course were less likely to succeed than students who had stayed in the system for two or more years - this much is not surprising.

But it is of interest that amongst students taking their first post-Foundation course, those who by the end of the third month of the course were omitting the broadcasts had a significantly higher chance of failure than those who were continuing to watch and listen. Early omission of broadcasts, then, must be a useful factor in identifying "students at risk".

Although the correspondence text related to the Cumbria programmes had been mailed extremely late, no-one gave "non-receipt" of even "late receipt of the

TABLE 5. Viewing/Listening and Year of Entry by Failure Rate

		Succeeded Nos.	Failed/withdrew Nos.	Totals Viewing/Listening Nos.
'A' students:	Viewed and/or listened	31	-	31
	Neither viewed nor listened	8	1	9
'B' students:	Viewed and/or listened	40	1	41
	Neither viewed nor listened	7	-	7
'C' students:	Viewed and/or listened	20	3	23
	Neither viewed nor listened	5	9	14
All students:	Viewed and/or listened	91	4	95
	Neither viewed nor listened	20	10	30
All students:	Success and failure	111	14	125

χ^2 = 10.42 at 95% level of significance. Other years tested but no significant difference.

unit text" as a reason for not viewing; indeed the incidence of non-receipt among students who did not view was no higher than in the sample as a whole (Table 6, see over).

As the table shows, over half the students watched only on Saturday 27th, and not surprisingly, over a quarter of these students had not received the unit text when they watched the programme. However, students who watched subsequent transmissions - and who had received the text - were no more likely to have read even the Cumbria section of Unit 6 before seeing the programme.

Indeed, at the time of questionnaire completion, just under a quarter of the student respondents had not read Unit 6. By the end of the recommended two week period for the study of Unit 6, 18% of students had still not read the unit, (this excludes those students who returned the questionnaire during that two week period); and at a distance of four weeks after the recommended starting

TABLE 6. Receipt of Unit 6 and Reading of Cumbria Section Before Viewing TV3 (Students Only)

	Unit not received		Read thoroughly		Skimmed through		Not read		Total	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
Viewed Sat. 27 only	12	27	4	9	11	24	18	40	45	53
Viewed other times	3	7	6	15	14	35	17	42	40	47
All viewers	15	18	10	12	25	29	35	41	85	100
Non-viewers	3	7	———						40	100
All students	18	14	———						125	100

date, 11% had still not read the unit. By the end of the fourth month of the course then, over a tenth of the students were already one month behind schedule, despite an "extra" week given at Easter for catching up and the probability that the high proportion of teachers in the sample would have made use of their Easter holiday fortnight to make up some of the lost time. Several possible reasons can be suggested for this delay. The CMA responses indicate that students found the two preceding units - 4 and 5 - heavy going. Although the recommended study time for Unit 4 was 8 hours, 38% of students spent 12 hours or more on that Unit, and about a third of students spent 15 hours or more on Unit 5 which had a recommended 12½ hours. Many tutors, in their CT4 responses, expressed concern at the "massive quantity" of the course material, and the "unusually heavy demands" it was making of students, in terms of both time, and of "the need to analyse a diverse body of information".

Another contributory factor to the considerable delay with which many students approached the Units, was clearly the timing of the assignments (see Table 1). Undoubtedly, many students pace themselves against assignment due and cut-off dates (see Broadcast Evaluation Report 1).[1] This point was made by a number of E221 tutors via the CT4: "TMA cut-off dates are useful for students to focus their study periods on. As it is I have so far had three tutorials this year ... when it was apparent that most students had not yet started to read their units". Another noted that students "seemed only to turn to E221 after completing an assignment, [for another course] due in April". This raises, of

1 Ahrens, S., Burt, G., Gallagher, M. M231 Analysis. Broadcast Evaluation Report 1, Open University, 1975.

course, the more general problem of timing for students taking two or more half-credit courses. But the specific question of scheduling within one course can be greatly resolved simply by moving assignment due and cut-off dates closer to the recommended reading dates for the relevant units - as several E221 tutors suggested. Clearly, the timing of the first tutor-marked assignment, which is not "cut-off" until 18th May - the fifteenth week of the course - seems to be just encouraging students to get behind (one student actually said that he was "too busy trying to do essay for TMA 01" to watch or listen to the programmes, and several others said they were "behind schedule" and consequently had to omit some items: in this case, the television and radio programmes). Indeed, the whole notion of using "due-dates" and "cut-off dates" could be seriously re-examined, since the former are generally disregarded by most students.

The Television Programme: Attitudes and Understanding

Students and tutors were asked whether they thought the programme was useful, whether they liked it, and what they thought the point of the programme was. (In subsequent studies, as a result of a certain amount of confusion noticed in a small proportion of the answers of the E221 sample, question-wording was altered from "like" to "enjoy" and from "point" to "purpose"). A notable feature of the programme being its attempt to present "reality" with what was felt to be a minimum but necessary amount of academic commentary, specific questions were asked about the amount of commentary provided, the extent to which viewers were able to identify the various members of the Committee and - if they were not normally able to do this - what sort of supporting identification they would have liked. In asking these different questions, the aim was not so much to develop an assessment of the programme based on specific criteria such as "usefulness" or "interest", but to build up a picture of the programmes overall reception and the extent to which it achieved its intended purpose.

Dealing first with the specific questions related to the commentary and the ease with which speakers could be identified, it appears that while the majority of students and tutors were happy on both aspects, problems were experienced by a large minority of those who saw the programme.

TABLE 7. Satisfaction with Amount of Commentary

	Not enough		About right		Too much		Don't know		No. of responding viewers	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
Students	23	28	56	66	3	3	3	3	85	100
Tutors	5	14	29	80	2	6	-	-	36	100

While a very small number felt that there was too much spoken commentary, and that what there was "intruded" on the rest of the programme, a notable proportion said that there was not enough.

TABLE 8. Ease with which Speakers could be Identified

	Always		Generally		Seldom		Never		No. of responding viewers	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
Students	13	15	62	73	10	12	-	-	85	100
Tutors	9	25	26	72	1	3	-	-	36	100

Again, it is worth noting that one-eighth of the students were seldom sure "who was who" among the speakers in the programme. Moreover, there is some parallel between degree of satisfaction with the amount of commentary and the ease with which student respondents could identify the speakers: while one-eighth of all students were "seldom" sure, a quarter of those who felt there was insufficient commentary said they were "seldom" sure who was who. Both of these factors are related to students' overall reception and comprehension of the programme: two-thirds of the students who wanted more commentary were confused by the programme as a whole, and did not grasp its purpose (see below).

Clearly, from Table 9, both students and tutors would have liked more supporting identification of the various individuals in the programme and their allegiances: over half of the tutors and 70% of the students indicated that they would have valued more help here. (The percentages are high because most of those who were "generally" sure, nevertheless said they would have liked extra help.)

TABLE 9. Preferences for Supporting Identification of Speakers in the Programme

	On the screen		In the commentary		In the notes		Other		No change suggested		No. of responding viewers	
	Nos.	%*	Nos.	%*	Nos.	%*	Nos.	%*	Nos.	%*	Nos.	%*
Students	36	42	19	22	15	18	4	5	25	29	85	100
Tutors	14	39	2	6	7	19	-	-	17	47	36	100

*% of students/tutors who made suggestions: more than one preference could be suggested.

The fact that so few tutors opted for verbal introductions and reminders in the spoken commentary, while almost a third of the students would have liked this, is perhaps some indication of the extent to which they, more than the students, recognised the intention underlying the lack of commentary in the programme (see below).

Overall, the reception of the programme was more positive than negative, with relatively more tutors than students tending to express favourable reactions.

TABLE 10. Enjoyment of the Television Programme

	Very much		Quite a lot		All right		Not very much		Not at all		Don't know		No. of responding viewers	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
Students	8	9	22	26	40	47	14	16	1	1	-	-	85	100
Tutors	8	22	9	25	16	45	3	8	-	-	-	-	36	100

Reasons given by both students and tutors for liking the programme tended to centre on the realism and authenticity of the recorded event and on the opportunity it gave to witness aspects of the decision-making process. "As a committee member myself for some 12 years, I felt this programme was unique in conveying to the public and the profession what actually goes on at such meetings" (tutor); "provided a unique experience for me. I have never witnessed an Education Committee in session before" (student). The programme was praised for having given "realistic insight" into the workings of an Education Committee, and "it was interesting to see in reality the interplay of the various factors involved in decision-making, which we are studying" (student); "it was an insight into complexities and the manner in which they are handled in an accepted code of behaviour" (student). Appreciation was expressed for the opportunity given to "eavesdrop ... far better than an 'acted' programme, portraying an artificial situation" (student), to observe "the machinations of personalities in committee situations" (student) and to see something of "how decision-making is so influenced by the individual" (student).

The programme structure and production were also specifically mentioned: "It was clearly introduced and the drama and significance of the occasion ... were admirably demonstrated" (tutor); "It kept going all the time; any interjections by Bob Bell were well made and at times when visual interest flagged" (student); "Good programme backing the units and giving a visual stimulation to aid memory of rather dry ... unit/s" (student).

And one tutor liked it "because, in contrast with much Open University material, it was possible for me to form my own opinions on it - very little lecture attached".

However, it was this very aspect of the programme which caused about a quarter

of the students to react negatively (see Table 12 below). Comments such as "not instructive enough", "did not feel that I had learnt very much from it", "I could see very little point in it!" "It appeared to be a jumbled non-relevant argument", and "confusing" were made by students who either did not understand the "eavesdropping" idea, or if they did, simply did not appreciate it. A number of students criticised the programme as being "bitty" or "disjointed" and "lacking in continuity": this was linked in some cases to the point about the "direction", or lack of it, in the programme, and in others to more mechanical problems caused either by an inability to "relate documents to speakers. Wasn't always sure what was happening" or by difficulties in identifying the allegiances of the speakers: "it seemed that just as I was picking up the threads of the situations the commentator intervened". The same point was made in the CT4 by a tutor who said: "Despite reading notes in advance, it was difficult to assimilate who was who, with what party allegiance, etc., before one was required to pass to the next person/ episode". One student felt mislead by the "points to watch out for" highlighted by the presenter at the beginning of the programme: "very few of them occurred and I got the feeling I might have missed something".

A more widespread negative reaction was that the programme did not cover enough ground, in terms of new information or hard facts. This point was made by both students and tutors: "Several points brought out but a lot of wasted time" and "it seemed to take rather a long time to make fairly obvious points". Comments such as these seemed to reveal a basic lack of sympathy with a primary intention of the programme, to give "authentic evidence of decision-making procedures" - an "as it happens" approach. More fundamentally, a small number of students and tutors questionned the value of the "narrow and limited scope" of the programme.

Ratings of the programme's usefulness, were almost always in line with the expressed enjoyment of the programme. Four students, who liked the programme either "very much" or "quite a lot", did not in fact find it useful: each said this was because study of the unit text had not yet begun or been completed. Two students and one tutor, who did not like the programme, nevertheless found it useful. In the case of the tutor, this was a "negative" usefulness: presumably discussion was sparked by his criticism of the programme - its "misleading passive view of the Chief Education Officer". The two students in question had been distracted by the "disjointed" nature of the programme, but still found it useful to observe an actual committee meeting.

TABLE 11. Usefulness of the Television Programme

	Very useful		Fairly useful		Not very useful		Not at all useful		Don't know		No. of responding viewers	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
Students	9	10	41	48	27	32	5	6	3	4	85	100
Tutors	9	25	16	44	10	28	1	3	-	-	36	100

From the students' point of view, the programme's usefulness was expressed in terms of the extent to which it "amplified and made alive much of the theory contained in the course units". While this was the level at which most students described the programme's usefulness, some were more specific: "useful to see how paper-bound a Council is, how much of the reading has to be done beforehand, how much filtering of opinion has taken place outside of the Council"; "showed how Committees get sidetracked"; "gave some insight into procedure". On the whole these students appeared to appreciate the "experiential" function of the programme, and many in fact expressed their reaction in terms of that experience: "opened up one's eyes", "gave me an opportunity of 'sitting in'", "text ... cannot indicate the extent of participation as 'live' viewing can", "convince[d] me of the 'reality' of Cumbria".

While most of the tutors did see the programme's usefulness as "bringing reality to the printed text", fewer of them made explicit reference to the experience provided by the programme - presumably because many tutors are quite accustomed to this particular experience. At the same time, several tutors did mention the "visual impact" of the programme and the information which could be gleaned from "gesture, influence etc, as well as ... the debate itself". A further point raised by tutors was the programme's usefulness in providing discussion material. The relevance of the programme material to TMA 02 was also pointed out - by one tutor and one student.

Two main reasons were given by the considerable proportion (38%) of students who did not find the programme useful: on the one hand were those who had not yet done the associated reading (this is not to imply that all of the other had done the reading - only that these particular students mentioned this as a specific reason for the programme's lack of usefulness); and on the other were those who felt that the programme added little or nothing to the information provided in the printed text. A few others said that the points made in the programme were "obvious" and that consequently the television time was wasted; and several more felt that time had been wasted because the programme had dwelt too long on matters which seemed irrelevant (either to education or to the process of decision-making). "Too much time was devoted to Mrs. Macaulay and her complaint". Finally there were those few who were confused by this particular programme or didn't know what they were "supposed to get out of it"; these included, for instance, a tutor who was "not clear about the circumstances of the programme. I do not see to what

extent or where I could introduce it in my tutorials"; and one student who has "always found the TV component of OU courses to be unhelpful" (an 'A' year student, who has taken M100, T100, E281, E282, E283, E262 and E352).

The question which asked about the "point" of the programme was aimed at throwing more light on the extent to which the educational intent or the programme had been both recognised and realised. Because of the different levels at which various individuals responded it was extremely difficult to group these answers. Some made simple statements, such as "an example of decision-making at work" which could contain an understanding of everything or nothing, or "to bring to life the Unit", which is fair enough but not very revealing. Others gave answers which though they were based on general statements, contained particular references or examples, and were consequently more comprehensive, e.g. "To highlight some of the sociological and ideological issues thrown up by local government reorganization (e.g. regional differences and emphasis, "open" v. "closed" government) and the effect of "these on decision-making". Still others listed "points" which they thought the programme had made. Clearly, while a complex answer, which covers the main issues of the programme, can be taken as a reasonable indication that the respondent has understood the programme's "message", a simple answer does not imply that he has not. It is, therefore, only when answers to this particular question are examined in relation to answers to others that a more accurate picture can be developed of the extent to which the programme's purpose has been understood, and that respondents can be - even then rather tentatively - grouped.

It is possible to say, from a simple examination of these answers alone, that the majority of both students and tutors appear to have grasped the principal issues involved - the problems and effects of local government reorganization, and the complexity of the decision-making process. Tutors were clearly able to come to grips more easily with the implications for the general issues of decision-making and reorganization of particular points made in the programme: their answers were more synthetic and tended to deal with the programme as a whole. Students were more likely to pick on individual points or personalities and to hinge their answers on these.

A detailed analysis was made of each individual respondent's answers to the question on the "point" of the programme in relation to his answers to other questions - principally those on "enjoyment" and "usefulness", but also, where appropriate, those for example concerning his use of broadcast notes. From this analysis four distinct groups within the total sample can be described, summarised in Table 12. (Table 12, see over).

By far the largest group - just over half of the students and almost two-thirds of the tutors - is composed of those who enjoyed the programme, found it useful and understood its purpose. Many of this group stressed the "experiential" aspect of the programme already referred to, mentioning the "unique experience" to "sit in" and "absorb the atmosphere" of such a meeting. The programme was useful because it "clarified understanding of how decisions

TABLE 12. Overall Reaction to the Television Programme

	Group 1		Group 2		Group 3		Group 4		Unclassifiable		No. of responding viewers	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
Students	43	51	11	13	7	8	19	22	5	6	85	100
Tutors	23	64	6	17	-	-	5	14	2	5	36	100

(Unclassifiable: students/tutors who did not respond to open-ended questions).
Group 1 = Enjoyed, Useful, Understood.
Group 2 = Not Enjoyed, Not Useful, Understood.
Group 3 = Enjoyed, Useful/Not Useful, Not Understood.
Group 4 = Not Enjoyed, Not Useful, Not Understood.

are made" and point of the programme was generally expressed as an attempt to show the "factors involved in decision-making", "the complexity of their inter-relationships" and the "increased difficulties presented at a time of reorganization".

A second group consists of a relatively small number (11 students and 6 tutors) who neither enjoyed the programme nor found it useful but who nevertheless understood its intention. Most of these were simply out of sympathy with the style of the programme, and would have preferred a more factual or didactic approach: a completely different sort of programme, in other words. They felt that the programme was "not instructive enough" and that there was "little of substance to abstract". They understood what the programme was setting out to do, in illustrating the "difficulties of reorganization" and "giving authentic evidence of how an Education Committee works" and the "many factors affecting decisions" but they did not want, or did not need, the experience which the programme attempted to provide. It was not useful, because it showed "nothing new", was "obvious", or contained "few new facts". A few others in this second group disapproved not so much of the style of the programme, but of its content. Again, they understood the programme's aims but felt that "the topics chosen could have been more interesting": these few, did not then necessarily want a different type of programme - just one which covered slightly different ground.

Another very small group - 7 - consists entirely of students. This third group is made up of students who said that they enjoyed the programme and who may or may not have found it useful, but who did not understand its message. In describing the "point" of the programme, they tended to pick on one aspect of the proceedings and either just state it baldly, or use it to interpret the entire programme "the Committee merely approves the recommendations of Sub-Committees"; "show different allegiances of members"; "show that professionals do not necessarily ran LEAs". The reasons given by these students for enjoyment

of the programme are interesting: "easy to watch and listen to", "required little concentration", "knew all the characters involved". It is conceivable that those in this group were seduced by the format of the programme - its relative lack of didactism - and just sat back and enjoyed it. When asked about the purpose of the programme, they had no overall understanding of it and simply brought to mind that aspect of the programme which had struck them most forcibly at the time of viewing. We are, of course, dealing here with a very small number of students and it is tempting to read more into the responses than can be justified: we have therefore put forward the preceding interpretation tentatively, but with reasonable confidence in its appropriateness to these students.

The fourth and final group is, in fact, the second largest - 19 (one fifth) students and 5 tutors. These were respondents who neither enjoyed the programme nor found it useful: moreover, they did not understand its purpose. It was a "jumbled non-relevant argument", it "lacked continuity" and would have been "just as effective as a radio programme", it was "bitty" and "confusing". They were confused by the style of the programme, and did not know what they themselves were expected to bring to the programme, or get from it. Asked about the "point" of the programme, they either had "no idea" or gave answers which were quite uninformed: "to show how the Education Committee of Cumbria are involved in educational decision-making", "show a committee made up of people of varying political views meeting in order to sort out some sort of programme for the following meetings of the new Cumbria Education Committee"; to show how "members still maintained area differences". Those who made criticisms of the programme gave further evidence of having fundamentally misunderstood it: "a lot of valuable transmission time wasted on irrelevant minor points of procedure"; "no real discussion of agenda items"; "too much time spent on matters not completely relevant". Within this group, there was more difficulty in identifying speakers than was so for the sample as a whole, and more of this group felt that there was not enough commentary. Moreover, there is some evidence that the students within the group were more obedient in attempting to take notes during the programme and in trying to follow the documents and minutes with the members during the meeting (see below) although they had markedly more difficulty in doing both than was true for the entire sample. While it would be unwise to deduce an element of causation here (i.e. that confusion or difficulty in carrying out the activities led to confusion about the programme itself, or vice versa), it is tempting to speculate that students who follow such instructions to the letter - even when the instructions are quite demanding - may expect full guidance on every aspect of their work (two of these students did actually say that they preferred "listening to a lecturer"): they would thus be at something of a loss when confronted with this sort of material, since both the notes and the programme content were meant to be "sifted through" and interpreted.

If we now look at the four groups and their overall reception of the television programme, we can say that although, in general, the main themes -

complexity of decision-making, problems of reorganization - were recognized, the purpose of the programme was not always fully understood and consequently not always achieved.

TABLE 13. Extent to Which Purpose of Television Programme Achieved

	Fully Achieved		Partially Achieved		Not Achieved		Unclassifiable		No. of responding viewers	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
Students	43	51	18	21	19	22	5	6	85	100
Tutors	23	64	6	17	5	14	2	5	36	100

Taking Groups 1 and 2 as those in which the purpose was understood, we can say that the majority did grasp it (over 80% of the tutors and 60% of the students). However, the purpose of the programme can only be said to have been fully achieved for Group 1 - it is fair to say that, a priori, aspects of the programme's aims could not be achieved for Group 2. While its purpose was not understood by Groups 3 and 4, it is likely that the programme was partially successful - in conveying the flavour of a real situation - to most of those in Group 3, but not at all successful as far as Group 4 was concerned.

Broadcast Notes and Note-Taking

A list of seven "points to look out for" was given in the broadcast notes, and it was suggested that students should make notes on these, during the programme, in the margin of the documents - contained in 25 pages of the broadcast notes - which they were advised to follow during the broadcast just as the committee members taking part in the televised meeting were having to do. Anyone following these instructions would clearly have been involved in a fair frenzy of activity, both mental and manual - particularly since some of the documents were unfortunately printed in the wrong order!

TABLE 14. Reading of Broadcast Notes Before Watching Television Programme

(a) = the 'basic' notes

(b) = the documents

	Read all Thoroughly		Thoroughly(a) Skimmed(b)		Skimmed both		Skimmed(a) Didn't read(b)		Didn't read any		Didn't receive		No. of responding viewers	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
Students	8	9	21	25	32	38	5	6	10	12	9	11	85	100
Tutors	13	36	1	3	12	33	1	3	7	19	2	6	35	100

It is worth noting that almost a quarter of both students and tutors watched the programme without having seen any of the notes. In some instances, the notes hadn't actually been received at the time of transmission, but of those students who had received the notes, almost 20% hadn't looked at the "documents" before the programme.

TABLE 15. Use of Documents During the Television Programme

	Followed without difficulty		Followed with difficulty		Tried to, but stopped		Not Followed		Didn't receive		No. of responding viewers	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
Students	16	19	19	22	14	16	27	32	9	11	85	100
Tutors	10	28	4	11	2	6	18	50	2	6	36	100

As the table shows, of those who had received the broadcast notes, over a third of the students and more than half the tutors didn't try to follow the 25 page documentation during the programme. Of the remainder who did, most had difficulty, and about a quarter of those who tried, gave it up.

Table 16 shows that about half the sample did not attempt to take notes during the programme and of those who did, again the majority had difficulty.

TABLE 16. Note-Taking During the Television Programme

	Taken without difficulty		Taken with difficulty		Tried to, but stopped		Not taken		No. of responding viewers	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
Students	11	13	13	15	17	20	44	52	85	100
Tutors	8	22	6	17	4	11	18	50	36	100

Of those students who tried to take notes, three-quarters were also trying to follow the committee documents, while about 60% of those who were following the documents, also tried to take notes. Those who tried both, however, appeared to have no greater difficulty than those who simply attempted one or other of the exercises. A more important factor in the

difficulty experienced was the thoroughness with which students had prepared for the broadcast: all but four of the twenty-nine students who had read at least part of the notes thoroughly, attempted at least one of the exercises (i.e. either note-taking or following the documents) - while 30% of all students had attempted neither - and of those students who had read thoroughly through all the material, none actually gave up on either task.

Clearly, however, the combination of activities was too much. Only 3 students said that they managed to take notes and follow the documents without difficulty: of these each had read thoroughly all the material in the broadcast notes, one watched the programme twice and another was the sole student who saw all three transmissions. On this particular point, although it was suggested in the notes that "note-taking would be likely to be particularly fruitful at a second viewing of the programme", in fact students who watched the programme twice were less likely to take notes than those who watched only once - perhaps because many of the latter knew that this would be their only opportunity to view and hence were more anxious to make a note of important points.

Most students (75%) and tutors (80%) referred back, at least briefly, to the notes after the programmes. Of the 17 students who did not, 7 had not looked at the notes beforehand either, and the other 10 had just skimmed the lot. So, of the 34 tutors and 76 students who received the notes, 9% of each group - three tutors and 7 students - did not use them at all.

On the whole, the broadcast notes were found to be useful: 2 tutors (6%) and 14 students (18%) said that they were not. The notes were useful in providing background information "to the "events that arose in the Committee meeting", to "put the programme in perspective"; and both as "preparation" for the programme and as a means of "reinforcing" or "consolidating" the programme after viewing. A number of tutors and students felt that without the notes "the programme would have been meaningless". Those who did not find the notes useful were for the most part overwhelmed by the sheer amount of material: "too detailed", " a mass of information" "too complicated", "just too much to absorb". Only three of these students read even part of the notes thoroughly: most were presumably overcome by the volume of paper and just skimmed through it. One of the two tutors said he didn't find the notes useful because he didn't find the programme useful: with the students, too, there was not surprisingly a strong relationship between usefulness of the programme and usefulness of the notes. All but 2 of these 14 students did not find the programme useful, and these were, with only one exception, those students who were "confused" by the programme (in Group 4 above).

While it may well be that with a little more effort in their pre-reading, some of these students could have made more sense of the notes and thus of the programme, it would be unwise to be dismissive about this group of students: to say "that they should have tried harder". In view of what has been shown about the extent to which these students attempted to carry out the suggested activities, they were clearly prepared to try reasonably hard. Moreover, they form one-sixth of those in our student sample who had received the broadcast notes - a sizeable minority. It is primarily through the broadcast notes that extra guidance could be given to such students about the style of the programme, what they are expected to do with the programme material (i.e. sift and interpret as well as just observe) and how the documentation provided can help them in this.

The Radio Programme

Just over half of the students and rather more of the tutors listened to the programme: a much smaller student/tutor differential for the radio programme than for television viewing. These included ten students and one tutor who had not seen the associated television programme (Table 17, see over). Most listeners heard only one transmission, but some of those who recorded the programme - almost half the students and a quarter of the tutors who heard it - may in fact have listened more than once.

Almost a fifth of students and over a quarter of the tutors did not in fact listen to the programme at either transmission time, but recorded it and played it back later. Besides the ten students who had not seen the television programme at all, the student listeners included a further eleven who, at the time of hearing the radio programme had not yet seen the television broadcast, although they subsequently did so. Similarly, among the tutor listeners was one who had not seen the television programme at all, and another five who had yet to do so. Consequently, a third of the students and a quarter of the tutors who heard the programme did so without the advantage of having seen the committee meeting to which considerable reference was made in the radio broadcast.

Reasons For Not Listening

The sixty students in our sample who did not listen to the programme gave a wide variety of reasons for this. Half of these students did not see the television programme either and these tended to give what may be called "on-going" reasons, that is reasons which indicate that they have a low commitment to radio and that they rarely or never listen (see above). The other half - i.e. students who had seen the television programme - was fairly equally divided between those who gave this sort of "on-going" reason: "no VHF radio", "too busy" "lack of time" - or, as in some cases, gave no reason at all - and those who gave the "one-off" sort of reason attributable to a particular circumstance, "flu", "tape recorder broke". One student said he didn't listen because the television programme had not been useful, and in fact students who reacted negatively to the

Table 17: Listening Figures

	Heard at least once		Tues 18.25 pm		Sat. 16.20 pm		Taped		Heard once only		No. of Respondents.	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
Students	65	52	42	34	16	13	30	24	47	38	125	100
Tutors	24	59	13	32	6	15	7	17	17	41	41	100

television programme were less likely to listen to the radio than those who had reacted positively. However, since again their reasons for not listening seem to fall fairly equally into the two categories ("on-going" and "one-off") it is not really possible to say that this particular television programme caused them not to listen.

The reasons given by tutors tended to be more of the "one-off" variety: but maybe tutors put more effort into their rationalisation! On the whole, nothing of note can really be gleaned from the reasons given except perhaps that it might be worth sending tutors cassette tapes of all the radio programmes for their courses, to allow them more flexibility.

The Radio Programme: Attitudes and Comprehension

The three basic questions concerning enjoyment, usefulness and purpose asked about the television programme were repeated for the radio broadcast, and a question on the extent to which the radio had increased understanding of the television programme was included. The aim of these questions was, as before, to allow an overall picture to be built up of the programme's reception and the extent to which its purpose had been understood and achieved.

Table 18: Enjoyment of Radio Programme

	Very much		Quite a lot		All right		Not very much		Not at all		Don't know		No. of responding listeners	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
Students	4	6	17	26	28	43	12	19	-	-	4	6	65	100
Tutors	2	8	7	29	9	37	6	25	-	-	-	-	24	100

Rather more tutors and students liked the programme than did not; however in the case of tutors there was a fairly equal split - just over half being positive and just under half negative. (The positive/negative split has been achieved by coding the open-ended comments of those who answered "all right" to the question). Of the students, more than half enjoyed it, but over a third didn't. And 4 students said they didn't know. This is interesting, since it seems rather unlikely that someone wouldn't know whether he had enjoyed a programme - and indeed no-one responded to the television programme in this way. However, this is a reaction which a small proportion of students do appear to have about radio (other studies in this series have found similar evidence) and seems to be an aspect of the rather vague approach and unformed views which some students bring to radio, and of the difficulty which others have in using it as an effective learning medium. These particular students "didn't know" because they "didn't seem to grasp the point" or because they couldn't recall the programme. Two of them had, in fact, taped the broadcast.

Those who liked the programme tended to stress their appreciation of the opportunity to get closer to some of the speakers from the committee meeting. Two aspects of this were mentioned - the "humanization" which the programme achieved: "gave a much clearer picture of some of the individuals involved, and the things which were important to them" (student), "interesting to hear them speaking and putting forward their feelings 'out of committee'" (student); and the added "depth" which the radio programme gave to some of the issues raised at the televised meeting: "highlighted the different interests of the three parties" (student), "brought out the regional rivalries" (tutor). Several mentioned the realism introduced by the contrast between "the apathy of the street interviews and the dedication of the three councillors" (students).

Reasons for not liking the radio programme were that it "didn't add much to the TV", that it was "predictable", "too general and trivial", "repetitive" and "too polite". This conveys the general feeling among those who didn't enjoy the programme - that it contained very little new material, and that it was faintly boring. On a slightly different track, several students felt that there was "too much talking" and that more commentary or explanations should have been given. And one student said that he just doesn't "enjoy radio programmes as much as TV".

Again, enjoyment was a good indicator of the extent to which the programme would be found useful: the break-down was almost exactly as for the "enjoyment" question. (Table 19, see over). The usefulness of the programme was seen primarily as its having given both "background" and "detail" to the television programme: it showed the "frame of reference from which individual Education Committee members viewed their own responsibilities and saw their own areas", and it brought into focus particular issues: "territorial problems, accepted practices and procedures", "the Green Book", "separate functions of the elected members and the officers". Secondarily, it was felt useful to have a more personal element brought to the case study, "views of some individual councillors involved", "individuals and their problems".

Table 19: Usefulness of Radio Programme

	Very Useful		Fairly Useful		Not very Useful		Not Useful at all		Don't Know		No Answer		No. of Responding Listeners	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
Students	9	14	30	46	18	28	4	6	4	6	-	-	65	100
Tutors	3	12	10	42	9	37	1	4	-	-	1	4	24	100

The main criticism of the programme from those who did not find it useful was that it added little or nothing to the television programme. Indeed there was very little difference between the reasons given for not liking the radio programme and those given for not finding it useful. Overall, moreover, whether they found it useful or not, many respondents failed to give any reason at all or simply to refer back to the answer they had given to the previous question. Again, this is interesting since very few indeed did this when commenting on the television programme, and almost always the statements made about enjoyment of television differed to some extent from those made about its usefulness. One tutor felt that the radio programme could have been improved "by the participants talking about the TV programme directly and the points raised by it" and this feeling was shared by the student who suggested that the programme should have been "an analysis of the televised extract of the meeting".

The majority - about 60% of those students and tutors who saw the television programme - felt that the radio broadcast added little or nothing to their understanding of the television, but about a third said that the television programme did gain something with the addition of the radio. The order in

Table 20: Extent to which Radio Added To Understanding of Television

	A great deal		Quite a lot		Not very much		Not at all		Don't know		No Answer		No. of Respondents who viewed & listened	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
Students	5	9	15	27	27	49	6	11	2	4	-	-	55	100
Tutors	1	4	6	26	12	52	2	9	-	-	2	9	23	100

which the programmes were approached (television first, or radio first) had no effect here. However, there was a marked relationship between the usefulness rating of the radio programme and the extent to which this was said to add to the television. There was also a strong relationship between the usefulness

rating of the television programme itself and that of the radio programme. Every respondent who said that the radio added "a great deal" to the television, rated the radio programme as "very useful" and fell into Group 1 with respect to the television programme. And of those who felt the radio added "quite a lot", all but two (who were in Group 3) also fell into the first group. Appreciation of the radio programme was, then, closely linked to an appreciation of the television programme: this was to be expected, given the close association of the two. On the other hand, most of those who heard the radio programme without ever seeing the television (8 out of the 11) did say they found the programme useful: however, each of these related the radio directly to the case study in the written text and found it useful in that sense. For those who had seen the television programme and who reacted negatively to the radio the latter was felt to have been unsuccessful in one of two ways: either it was not appreciated because the television programme had not been fully appreciated, or - less frequently - it was not felt to be a valuable contribution - in itself - to the Cumbria case study. It failed for a few individuals simply because it was a radio programme.

Insofar as the radio programme had a purpose separate from that of the television programme, it was to look in greater depth at aspects of the general issues of the case study from the points of view of some of the individuals involved. Again, it was extremely difficult to make "sense" of the isolated responses to the question dealing with the "point" of the programme - for the reasons already given in the television section. These responses were looked at in relationship to other answers about the radio programme and an overall interpretation made. Three main groups emerged from this analysis (Table 21, see over).

The first group - which was slightly larger than the others - was composed of those who understood the purpose of the programme and were able to express it either exclusively in general terms or with reference to particular items. This group - one-third of the students and two-thirds of the tutors saw the programme's aim as that of "again indicating problems of reorganization, but stressing more personal and individualistic aspects"; "illustrating the interplay and motivation of councillors"; "illustrating the difficulties of reconciling different interests and ways of proceding". The programmes were also recognised as aiming to extend certain point raised in the television programme, "local loyalties", 'political conflicts".

The programme's purpose can only be said to have been partially understood by those in the second group, which consisted of over a quarter of the students and a quarter of the tutors. These tended to pick on one, or occasionally more than one, micro-aspect of the programme - e.g. "to show 'regional' conflicts", or to show "differing interests of individuals in an organisation of government, or "to illustrate the different opinions of the participants" - and see the purpose of the programme simply as this and no more than this. Almost none of this group enjoyed the programme or found it useful, and none really appeared to grasp the relationship between the two programmes - radio and television.

Table 21: Extent to Which Purpose of Radio Programme Understood and Achieved

	Fully		Partially		Not at all		Unclass-ifiable		No. of responding listeners	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
Students	21	32	17	26	24	37	3	5	65	100
Tutors	16	67	6	25	2	8	-	-	24	100

Indeed many saw the aim of one as being identical to that of the other: not surprising then that most of this group felt that the radio programme added little or nothing to the television.

The third group - over a third of the students and 2 tutors - clearly did not get to grips with the radio programme at all. Its purpose was described as "to show a real situation", "showed strong position of the urban councillors", "general interest in local government", "to prove that some felt the new boundary system would fail, but others were determined to see it work". Half could apparently see little relation between the television and radio programmes and there were a number here (8 students) who had been confused by the television programme. However, several in this group, had quite clearly fully appreciated the television programme, but were just not happy with the medium of radio: "lost interest", "can't remember", "didn't seem to grasp what I was supposed to be doing".

Overall, then, the purpose of the radio programme was fully understood by two-thirds of the tutors who listened, but only by one-third of the students, though it can be said to have been partially grasped by another quarter of both the students and tutors who listened to it. A sizeable minority of students - over a third - did not understand the programme's purpose at all. In this sense the purpose cannot really be said to have been achieved for the majority of the sample: however, although in some cases this was apparently because the radio programme was felt to have little intrinsic value, in the overwhelming majority of instances the degree of acquaintance with, and understanding of, other parts of the Cumbria Case Study - the correspondence text and the television programme - was a much more important factor. None of the ten students who heard the radio programme - but did not see the associated television broadcast - fully understood the function and purpose of the radio discussion, though most of them did find it helpful and were able to relate it to the unit text. Finally, all of those who did, on the basis of this analysis, understand fully the overall purpose of the radio programme had at least "skimmed" the Cumbria section of Unit 6 (the majority of the total sample had not) and had fully appreciated the television programme.

Broadcast Notes and Note-taking

The notes specifically related to the radio programme were relatively brief, and most of those who listened had at least referred to them before listening to the broadcast. But ten students and a quarter of the tutors (6) had not looked at them at all, and another five students had not received them. While this pre-reading of the notes was not a strongly discriminating factor in the listener's overall reception of the programme, reference back to the notes after the programme was more likely to be made by those who reacted positively to the broadcast. Interesting here that those who recorded the programme on tape were much more likely to refer back in detail to the notes.

Again, it was suggested that students should take notes while listening to the radio programme. While fewer of those who attempted this had difficulty in note-taking than those who tried to do so during the television programme, fewer students overall did, in fact, take notes while listening to the radio broadcast. To some extent this is related to the high percentage who taped the programme - almost half of those who listened. Only very few of these (3) took notes: the remainder presumably look on their cassette recorder as a sort of note-taker.

The Cumbria Case Study: Text, Television and Radio

Although it was suggested that, ideally, Unit 6 should have been read in its entirety before viewing and/or listening, only 7% of the students had been able to do this thoroughly. Several reasons - late arrival of material, scheduling of TMA - have already been suggested to explain this. Tutors did rather better - a third of them had read Unit 6 thoroughly before the programmes. Taking the Cumbria section of Unit 6 as a basic pre-requisite, over 40% of the students (and just under a quarter of the tutors) hadn't looked at even this section: a further 14% of students hadn't received it. So over half of those students who watched or listened, did so without having looked at any of the related material in the correspondence text, and a quarter of the tutors did the same.

A question was asked directly about the extent to which the programmes had added to the appreciation of the Unit. (Table 22, see over). The vast majority of those who felt that the programme, or programmes, had added appreciably in this way were those who had done at least some pre-reading of the correspondence text - only 2 of the 37 students, and none of the 14 tutors who were positive had done no reading before the broadcasts. Those who felt that the programmes had added little consisted mainly of the students (and tutors) who had done no pre-reading, or who at the most had skimmed through the material. Moreover, this group contained a higher proportion of students who had seen or heard only one of the two programmes.

This is an extremely important point, and one which in effect underlines well the extent to which the integration of the various elements of the case study has succeeded. Students who had read the text before-hand were more likely to see and hear both programmes; they were better able to understand the

Table 22: Extent to Which Programme(s) Added to Appreciation of Unit 6

	A great deal		Quite a lot		Not very much		Not at all		Don't know		No Answer		No. of those who had seen and/or heard programme and had read unit at time of questionnaire completion	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
Students	5	7	32	44	24	33	-	-	10	14	1	1	72	100
Tutors	3	9	11	34	10	31	1	3	2	6	5	16	32	100

purpose of the programmes and to see their function in the case study; and students who both watched and listened felt that the programmes added to their appreciation of the Unit. Students who had done no pre-reading were more likely to see or hear only one of the programmes, and to find that programme not useful - possibly because they approached the programme from the wrong point of view, expecting it to convey the basic information which they should have obtained from the text. Also, those who missed one or other of the programmes - particularly if they had not studied the correspondence text until afterwards - had more difficulty in guaging the contribution made by the programme they did see or hear. Almost all of the students who answered "don't know" to the question about the relationship, in terms of added appreciation, of the programmes to the rest of the Unit, had either seen only the television programmes or heard only the radio broadcast. Moreover, radio was more of a problem than television in this respect: clearly, the radio discussion was derived from the television committee meeting, so while the latter had an identity and in a sense stood on its own, the former could really only be appreciated when placed in a certain, more defined, context.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Specific

The success of the Cumbria Case Study depended largely on its various components - unit text, broadcast notes, television programme and radio programme - being approached and studied in a particular order, so that the differing roles and functions of each of these components could be fully appreciated. The majority of both students and tutors in our sample did not, in fact, approach the materials in the recommended order, and consequently for them much of the value of the integrated case study - its ability to provide different types of information and experience through different media - was lost. However, considerable value remained even for most of those who were not able to appreciate the totality of the case study: the particular elements under study - the television

and radio programmes - did, for the majority of those who watched and listened, make a worthwhile contribution to the study of the course material. In some cases, this contribution was only a small part of what the programmes had been planned to do.

While the disruption caused by the late mailing of course materials could not have been avoided, some of the problems in using the Cumbria study successfully were caused by features of the course structure and of the case study itself. If the Cumbria Case Study is to be used to advantage, certain changes should be made.

1. The first TMA cut-off date should be brought forward by at least three or four weeks so that students will be very much more likely to have kept more or less to the recommended reading schedule.

2. The recommended reading schedule should be re-examined: if pre-reading of Unit 6 - or part of it - is necessary preparation for the broadcast component of the case study, the starting date for reading of that unit should be, ideally, at least a week before the first transmission date of the first programme.

3. If anything can be done to lighten the work-load of the first few units of the course, this would further cut down the likelihood of students' falling behind schedule, and thus the possibility of their deciding to omit one or more elements of the case study.

4. The programme objectives could be re-written so as to underline the specific and separate functions of the television and radio programme, while still making clear that they are both part of a whole.

5. The style and nature of the television programme should be described in the broadcast notes. At present, only the content is outlined, but a large group of students would benefit if they were given more guidance as to how to approach and what to expect from this programme. For example, they need to be told that this is "source" material, that there will be little academic commentary, that they should be able to use and interpret what they see as evidence of particular points, and to help them reach certain conclusions. Much of this is there in the notes, or has been hinted at, but clearly needs to be expressed more fully.

6. The seven "points to watch out for" are just too many for most students to cope with (several tutors raised this problem). They should either be cut down, or students should be advised to pick two or three at their first viewing, and the others if they watch a second time.

7. Note-taking should be done immediately after the television programme.

8. The committee documents, of course, should be reprinted in the correct order. It would also be useful to stress more forcefully that it is really necessary to spend a few minutes examining these before the programme if students are to follow them during the meeting.

9. Extra name captions should be edited into the programme so that speakers are identified more often.

10. If possible, photographs (stills from the programme) should be printed in the notes both as an extra means of identification and as a mnemonic device.

11. The reference to the 'Green Book' in the broadcast notes should be corrected.

12. The importance of the order in which the different components are approached should be indicated more strongly, both in the broadcast notes and in the unit text itself. Students should be told that they really will lose out if they don't build up the case study from the strongest possible base.

13. Attention should be given to transmision slots so that in future years, as long as each programme is repeated, the radio programme is not in danger of being heard first; for example, if the second television slot is a more "popular" time than the first and a radio slot intervenes, the majority may prefer to listen to the radio programme first.

14. Discussion with producer and academic has indicated some feeling that tutors should be obliged to watch and listen to all broadcasts, so that they may be in a position to give guidance to students on these as well as on the written texts, and so that they can accurately assess the students' use of broadcast material in assignments. This is a matter which the Course Team, as a whole, could usefully discuss.

General

This evaluation study has indicated the very great problems involved in adopting an integrated multi-media case study approach, the most important being the crucial question of timing and the need to specify precisely the particular contribution which each component is intended to make to the integrated whole. Very careful thought must be given to planning and scheduling so that as far as possible students will have time to work through each element of the case study in the appropriate order, and will not be tempted to omit one item thus undermining the whole basis on which the study has been constructed. In view of the extent to which students have been shown to fall behind the recommended work schedule, particularly later in the course, it may be worth considering in some cases using later broadcasts as "leads" to the written text of the case study rather than as dependent on pre-reading of the printed material. It is essential, too, that students are made aware of the different sorts of information and/or experience which they should expect from each of the media used. A combination of optimal scheduling and clarification of expectation, should ensure that this sort of material is, in general, successfully used.

The qualification "in general" is a necessary reminder that there will always be individual differences in the expectations brought to any learning situation and consequently in what is extracted from it. In our study for instance, while clearly

the appreciation of one component of the case study depended on, or was related to, appreciation of the others - for most students - there were individuals who, for example, saw only the television programme and were able to make perfect sense of it. There was, moreover, a great deal of variation in the way that these programmes were perceived, or at least in the way that this perception was expressed. In making recommendations and in drawing conclusions, therefore, we have been aware that even with the changes which have been suggested, therewill be great differences in what students "make of" the individual programmes and of the case study as a whole.

A number of other general points have emerged from the study: the timing of assignments and its effect on students' work pattern; the high failure rate of students taking their first post-Foundation course and the extent to which omission of broadcasts may be an indicator of failure; the number of students - and, indeed, tutors - who have difficulty with semi-directive material; the low listening figures; the problem radio, as a learning medium, presents to some of those who do listen; the scant use made of broadcast notes by a proportion of those who watch or listen; the danger of setting too many student activities; the risk of confusion caused by large amounts of supplementary material.

Perhaps the most important point, however, emerged from the identification of a group of students who, despite evident willingness on their part to work on the material presented to them, needed considerably more guidance and direction than was, in fact, given. A dilemma is posed by the need to consider the difficulties caused to a group such as this by the presentation of material which requires a certain amount of interpretative input from the student, and the balancing rewards which such material holds for those who know how to approach it: over-direction, for this latter group, could erode the very purpose of the exercise. One might expect remedial help, for the students who need guidance, at tutorial level. This would involve two assumptions: that all tutors are comfortable with broadcast 'source' material, and that students who need help attend tutorials. Neither is a safe assumption. We have not yet reached the stage of being able to identify and locate different learning styles in the total student population and of providing different sorts of learners with different sorts of learning materials - or perhaps just more, or less, of the same. Until we are in a position to furnish different groups of students with learning materials appropriate to their own particular needs, we must at least ensure that all students have enough information to enable them to approach complex case study material with a clear awareness of what they are expected to do with it.

While many of our students will be quite experienced in using "source" material, there will be many others - and such a group has been identified in this study - who still believe that knowledge is to be "learnt" and who got through their Foundation course on that basis without too much trouble. To confront such students with fairly demanding multi-media source material early in a second level course is to ask them to make a leap which cannot reasonably be made without assistance. When and where such assistance should be given is perhaps a matter for Course Team discussion. Ideally, however, students should be introduced to this sort of material gradually, but early in their studies - at Foundation level , or even in a brief Preparatory course,

which could guide students not only in the use of the various media in the Open University teaching system but in the different types of information and experience which each medium is likely to convey. In the present absence of such preparation, individual courses, particularly at second level, in which case study and other source material is to be extensively used, could provide a more solid base by, say, giving over one programme early in the course to an illustrated explanation of the role of such material and of the ways in which students should approach it. Where courses making considerable use of case study material have already been made, the broadcast notes, if they can be reprinted, or even Stop Presses, could include such information.

The value of the inclusion, in any course, of material which demands - and develops - higher order skills is indisputable, but it must be acknowledged that until students can recognise that different sources of information need different types of "processing", this development cannot begin.

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